

**Outer Space and Inner Agency:
Reflections on the realm of the Outside in the labour movement**

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Introduction

This essay is a speculative exercise undertaken with the purpose of debating afresh one of the most hoary themes in the history of the working class - the question of intervention and agency. The subject is vast, and I will not pretend to have arrived at any definitive conclusion. The observations set out here are not based on an all-encompassing survey of labour history, but may be substantiated in a reading of some of my earlier research to which references will be provided.¹ The exercise will begin with a consideration of certain well-worn positions, but will then attempt to analyse the functional notions of space and boundary inherent in the repeated use of the term 'outside', 'outsider', "from without", etc in the language of managements and unionists of different hues. I will suggest that the question of the Outside is not merely one of the origins of consciousness (to which suffixes such as 'adequate', 'socialist', 'historical', etc may be attached as per ideological preference), but also, and perhaps primarily, one of class domination and class power. Hence, I will suggest an expansion of the historiographical use of the term. It is also about the types of plebeian agency and initiative, which the hegemons of labour found acceptable, versus those, which endangered their position and required to be thwarted in the immediate sense and disregarded historically.

¹ Dilip Simeon, *The Politics of Labour Under Late Colonialism: Workers, Trade Unions and the State in Chota Nagpur, 1928-1939*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi 1995. In the following pages, *RCL* refers to the Royal Commission on Labour; *BLEC* to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee; *TFL* to the Tata Files on Labour (per kind courtesy of Professor Blair Kling), and *TSA* to the Tata Steel Archives, Jamshedpur.

The material upon which I shall base my generalisations is the history of the labour movement in Chota Nagpur in the late 1920's and 1930's. Chota Nagpur, an administrative division in southern Bihar, is a demographically distinctive region, and an area, which was the location of the heaviest concentration of metallurgical and mining enterprises in colonial India. The core zones were the belt around the Tata Iron and Steel Company in Jamshedpur (TISCO), and the Jharia coalfields in the Dhanbad subdivision of Manbhum. Several 'associated companies' were engaged in engineering and metallurgical work in Singhbhum, which was also the site of metallic-ore mines. These included the Tinplate Company, the Tatanagar Foundry, the Indian Steel Wire Products Ltd, the Cable Company, and the mines and works of the Indian Copper Corporation at Ghatsila. Jharia and its environs contained the richest seams of superior-grade coal in India. There were also coal and mica mines in neighbouring Hazaribagh. Some 1 to 1.25 lakh workers were employed in the production and despatch of coal, the most crucial energy commodity in the colonial economy, for which the chief customers were the Railways, the merchant Marine, metallurgical industries, and industries running on steam-driven engines, including various mills.

Steel production in TISCO reached 429,000 tons in 1928 and 800,000 tons in 1939.² During 1914-1918 nearly all of its capacity was devoted to the British war effort in the Middle East. Its workforce was 30,135 in 1923-24³, after which the management began to implement reductions. In the late 1920's the local government reported a workforce of 29,000.⁴ Contractors' 'coolies' varied in number from 4000 to 8000. Allied industrial establishments such as the Tinplate Company, the Cable Company, the Copper Corporation, the Indian Steel and Wire Products Company, and the workshops of the EIR and the Bengal-Nagpur Railway (BNR), employed a total of 14,352 blue

² Verrier Elwin, *The Story of Tata Steel*, p. 78; and Satya Brata Datta, *Capital Accumulation and Workers' Struggle in Indian Industrialisation : The Case of Tata Iron and Steel Company 1910-1970*, Stockholm, 1986, pp. 10, 19.

³ S.K. Sen, *The House of Tata*, Calcutta 1975, p. 95.

⁴ File 5/VIII/1929 (this and other File references are from the Special Political section, Bihar State Archives, Patna). Part 1, Narrative, paragraph 33. Unless otherwise specified, hereafter all file references are from this source. Also, *RCL*, vol 4 part 1, p. 72.

collar workers in 1938.⁵ The population of Jamshedpur grew to 57,000 in 1921, and was 84,000 in 1931.⁶ In 1929, the pool of unemployed workers in Jamshedpur was estimated at 7000.

Our period covers the Depression and its aftermath, the advent of suffrage-based politics and the first elected Congress ministry. An examination of the labour movement during this phase illustrates the nature of nationalist political intervention, and the interaction of state, managements, unions and workers, during a period which witnessed the advent of elected ministries in the provinces and the decline of colonial power. During the eventful decade of the thirties, the workers of Chota Nagpur many of them first generation employees, underwent a painful learning process, in the course of which employers great and small, began reluctantly to concede a more democratic system of labour relations. These concessions were wrung from the capitalists in the course of bitter and often violent struggles which took place in a context complicated by the politics of nationalism and retreating imperialism. In a comment on the authoritarian nature of the managerial regimes then prevailing, Professor Radhakamal Mukerjee, a member of the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee had this to say:

even the formation of the trade union... provokes intimidation and victimisation on a large scale from the management. Workers want to... secure the rights of collective bargaining. But the agents whom they elect or choose are dubbed 'outsiders'... and treated with indifference and scorn... It is the managements' deliberate policy of non-recognition of unions and persistent refusal to deal with (their) accredited representatives... that is one of the most frequent causes of strikes in India, and a labour union hardly ever gets recognition without the ordeal of a strike...⁷

⁵ BLEC. vol 3-B, Books 1 and 2. The breakdown included: the Tinplate Company - 3027; the Copper Corporation - 5533 (including 3669 mining labour at Mosaboni); the Cable Company - 760; the Indian Steel and Wire Products Ltd. - 1965; the Jamshedpur Engineering and Machine Manufacturing Company - 140; The Tatanagar Foundry - 1925; the BNR Locoshed - 208; and the E.I.Railway Workshop - 794. The figures exclude clerical and supervisory staff.

⁶ The *District Gazetteer for Singhbhum* (1913), reported 5672 as the population of Sakchi village in 1911. The other figures are from the censuses.

⁷ Radhakamal Mukerjee. *The Indian Working Class*, Bombay, 1945; p. 307.

The struggles for democratic industrial relations and against intensification of labour were central to the history of the labour movement in Chota Nagpur, and had their own political expressions and consequences. In the context of a national movement committed to displacing the colonial bureaucracy, the insubordination of the proletarians seemed at certain moments to resonate with, and at others to diverge from that of the Indian elite, who were at pains to maintain the principle of managerial authority even as they challenged the political authority of the British; to stabilise their own rule over labour even as they sought to replace the ruling class. In such a situation, the intervention of so-called outsiders with multifarious motives and functions was a foregone conclusion. In the sphere of union activity, the appearance of this person, very often a local pleader, would suffice for managements to protest loudly about the imminent advent of Bolshevism. There are numerous instances of employers of labor claiming that their workers would have remained quite contented but for his malevolent intervention. Many initial struggles in major industrial centers were around the question of the right of the workers to be represented by such persons. One explanation is that the working class was uneducated and backward and needed the leadership of the political literati. This position possesses a certain resonance with classical Leninist epistemology, which posits the 'outside' theoretically as a prerequisite to an adequate class consciousness. In the context of an unfolding nationalist movement with its left-radical element, the notion of the indispensability of the political outsider acquired considerable acceptance.

Although the use of the term by managements was always in the pejorative, a close study of industrial relations impels the historian to examine the mercurial roles of these persons as they were viewed from different vantage points in the spectrum of classes and indeed, to ask the question about the very nature and necessity of the implied 'outside' sphere.

The Outsider as Mediator

To begin with, the 'outsider' was cast in the role of the fomenter of strikes or the saviour of an otherwise helpless mass of working people - in either case, the assumption

being that he was the real knowing Subject in the history of modern industrial relations. This carried the implication that the source of both subjugation and liberation lay in the Outside sphere, i.e., beyond the control of workers themselves. For radical critics of this approach, it needed to be demonstrated that leadership could arise from Within the ranks (as in 'organic' leadership) - this would constitute adequate proof that workers could mobilise their own liberation. But this kind of critique uncritically accepts the division of Outside vs Inside, as would appear from the following observation:

The really interesting question was whether there was a possibility of the proletariat outgrowing their mentors through the development of a leadership from the rank and file of the workers, i.e., the possibility of stepping from this paradigm into another where the outsiders, members of the intelligentsia, would not have such a role...⁸

The most common usage of the term 'outsider' was with reference to the matter of labour representation. Bhattacharya has pointed out that while the term might have emanated from the vocabulary of managers, it was acceptable to both moderate and left-wing politicians with union links - its acceptability being a reflex of a social reality. Of course, it took time for the capitalists to accept this. The Tatas, for example, were pressured by senior nationalist leaders to recognise the need for a union, this after violent conflicts had taken place in 1920 and 1922. It was only TISCO's need for Swarajist support on the tariff question that made conciliation possible - in 1924, Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das agreed to support their case on condition that the Jamshedpur Labour Association be recognised. In a meeting attended by Nehru, C.F. Andrews, N.M. Joshi, and C.R. Das, R.D. Tata was stubborn in his rejection of 'outsiders'. Finally, Andrews had to point out that a company employee could become an 'outsider' overnight, (as was the case with Gurudutt Sethi, a supervisor in the Electrical Department, who had been dismissed for his role in the lightning strike of 1922). Reacting to Tata's language, the leaders told him that they were all 'outsiders' and 'agitators'.⁹ TISCO continued to withhold recognition for some months on account

⁸ Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, 'The Outsiders: A Historical Note', in Ashok Mitra, (ed), *The Truth Unites, Essays in Honour of Samar Sen*, p. 93. Subarnarekha Publishers, Calcutta, 1985.

⁹ RCL, vol 4, part 1, p. 129; and TSA, File C-6/16. Notes of the Conciliation Committee Meeting dtd 20/8/24. For this and for the following references to the TISCO strike of 1928, see chapter 2 of *The*

of Sethi's presence as Secretary, even though the General Manager hardly saw the irony of his own request that Andrews be President. Pointing out that the GOI had accepted the current necessity of outsiders in leadership positions in trades-unions and had incorporated this in a new Trade Union Bill, Andrews threatened to resign with a public statement of his reasons for doing so. TISCO, he said, was bound to accept the JLA with Sethi on its rolls or as an outsider.¹⁰ In 1924, the JLA made a point of this in its first political statement: "we... refuse to forego our elementary right of electing any one as our office-bearer and secondly the election of outside office-bearers is absolutely necessary to prevent the office-bearers of the Association being intimidated by threats of dismissal..."¹¹

The matter of outsiders took a strange turn in the upheaval of 1928, when the JLA leadership, having failed to articulate the worker's grievances, did its best to keep another outsider, the pleader Maneck Homi from being elected the new president, on the ground that only enrolled and paid-up members were eligible for the post - an assertion radically at odds with their constitution. A sordid machination between the acceptable outsider, C.F. Andrews and the General Manager prevented the democratic renewal of the union, and laid the ground for much bitterness thereafter. The five-month long strike cum lockout in TISCO which ensued during May-September 1928 ended in a contrived settlement achieved through the mediation of Subhas Bose, the new outsider acceptable to TISCO.¹² There now took place eruptions of post-strike

Politics of Labour.

¹⁰ *TFL*. Letter dtd 11/6/25 from Andrews to R.D. Tata.

¹¹ *Appeal to the Members of the Indian Legislature*: JLA pamphlet, 1924, p. 5.

¹² *TFL*. Gaganvihari Mehta to 'Lalu Kaka' 21/8/28. "It is necessary to give in, say, to a man like Subash (sic) so that he might strengthen his influence with labour... while Homi's position might be correspondingly weakened... He also asked the men to be united, disciplined and firm - to march on when asked to *but to halt when the leaders cried halt*. This was as tactful a manner in which he could prepare them for a settlement... he is a nationalist first and foremost and recognises that Tata Steel is a national industry (of a sort) (sic) and realises that if it suffers heavily, American capital, which is very anxious to get control over it will step in... Subash is denounced in local communist circles... because of his refusal to accept communism... you will find him a very reasonable person to deal with....". (Original emphasis). See chapter 2 of *Politics of Labour*, and the Appendix to the chapter for the context and full text of this communication.

unrest on the shop floor. In an appeal to the administration to deal with Maneck Homi, whom management viewed as the instigator of these outbreaks, Managing Director Peterson referred to Bose as the men's "accredited leader", asked for Homi's meetings to be prevented by executive order, and stated that he (Homi) was not a workman and he is not out to assist labour but to create trouble".¹³ Bose was not a workman either, but was considered 'accredited' despite the perception among workers that the official union, the JLA had prevented them from making a democratic choice during their strike.

If the animosity to the outsider on the part of managers was the mirror image of the politicist viewpoint (both assigned primary subject-hood to him rather than to the workers he was leading), the problem for the historian arises when he discovers workers approaching outsiders to lead them. In this scenario, the educated outsider remains a leader but subjecthood and agency flows back to the helpless and illiterate working class. There is ample evidence from the history of the labour movement in Chota Nagpur to suggest that this was indeed the case. Thus, the developments which led to the TISCO strike of 1928 began in February that year, when, disgusted with the JLA's incapacity to deal with their grievances, the crane drivers went on a lightning strike and almost immediately formed a strike committee one of whose assigned tasks was to search for suitable alternative leaders. They rented an office and collected funds, demonstrating their capacity for self organization. The following month, the 'coolies' of the Rail Finishing Mill (mainly Adivasis, Chhatisgarhias, and Oriyas), struck in protest against manhandling and abuse by foremen, work intensification, and racial wage differentials, and organized meetings to drum up support among different sections of the workforce. A police report stated that:

The Santhals are most obstinate people and... may take recourse to violence at any moment, unless they are properly controlled. Most of the strikers are not members of the Labour Association, and moreover do not like to be guided by

¹³ File 5/VII/28. J.C.K. Peterson to J.D. Sifton, dtd 21/11/28. Sifton replied (dtd 25/11/28), that orders to stop meetings would not stand in court.

them. Hari Prasad Singh explained to me that he came to study labour problems and was simply astonished to find the coolies talking sense (sic) and fully conscious of their rights.¹⁴

Following this, the coolies and crane drivers undertook to find a leader, and it was at their invitation that Maneck Homi appeared in their midst. Notwithstanding these facts, the local sub-divisional officer attributed the unrest "entirely to political and communist agitation". Nor did the issue hinge upon the relative 'backwardness' of the workers concerned. As the strike spread to other departments, the General Manager complained:

Even the sweepers say they should share in the Company's profits... the men... are talking of having their own committees which must be consulted in giving increments, promotions... and before discharging anyone... in other words, pucca Bolshevism... (They) must again be put back in their proper place.¹⁵

Bureaucratic and political language became turgid when faced with this phenomenon. With working class initiative staring them in the face, officials and leaders alike would speak of the 'volatility' of the plebs - this served the purpose of relegating their agency to the emotional domain, and retaining a semblance of subjective superiority for those who liked to refer to themselves (as did the radical nationalist Subhas Bose) as the "controllers of labour".

The Outside as the Source of Identity

In considering the role of outsiders as patriots and ideologues, I do not mean to imply that their role as mediators was in any way diminished. However, it certainly was the case that when a mediator was also an activist of the national movement, and when the class struggle was unfolding in the context of sharpening national and even racial tensions, the function of mediation became ideologically complicated. Subhas Bose's activity during the Golmuri strike was one case in point, but the most important example of the patriotic outsider was Abdul Bari, whose immensely popular leadership

¹⁴ File 5/I/28. SB reports, dtd 16/3 and 17/3/28. Hari Prasad Singh was a JLA and Congress activist.

¹⁵. TFL. Alexander's letters to Peterson, dtd 25/4 and 26/4/28.

of the Jamshedpur metal workers and the miners of Singhbhum and Manbhum in the late 1930's was overdetermined by the national and race question. Bari was a prominent Congressman, at one time a part of the Congress socialists, and a protege of Rajendra Prasad. During the period of the first elected provincial ministries, he was the Deputy Speaker of the Bihar Legislative Assembly. His immense popularity during the 1937-39 period undoubtedly had political roots - in this sense he was not a merely a trade-union leader. Yet another example was that of Jaipal Singh, who intervened in union politics in Jamshedpur with the clear intention of mobilising plebeian Adivasis as part of a populist programme to develop a Jharkhandi consciousness.

The history of workers' struggles in the period of late colonialism obliges us to examine the extent to which labour interests were articulated in and through the national movement. In a region where many factories and mines hired British, American and German executives and supervisors, consciousness of racial discrimination was inevitable. The use of Gandhi caps in a showing of nationalist defiance by factory hands during periods of nationalist agitation and the responsiveness of workers to such agitation, as in 1930-31 and 1937-38, demonstrate an "identification with attitudes of anti-imperialism and nationalism" (Das Gupta, 1994) on the part of workers and the labouring poor. The advent of the first elected nationalist ministries in 1937 had a strong impact upon the working class. In this case the historical record is fairly rich. What took place in the year 1938 was nothing short of an upsurge. The remarkable feature of this movement was the unionization of marginal segments of the working class, coupled with a tendency especially among miners, to undertake strike action without the formulation of demands, and then call upon an 'outsider' to lead them - in the case of the Jharia coalbelt, it was invariably Abdul Bari. Without doubt, workers experienced the emplacement of Congress ministries as a sign that their countrymen were in power for the first time, and this became an occasion to release pent-up frustrations. Verbatim accounts of the (highly vibrant) speeches of Abdul Bari in 1938 reveal a great deal about the assumptions of nationalist politics, its relationship with the poorer segments of the population as a whole and the working class in particular.

Given this political context, the Outside became the wellspring of identities larger than that of class. Seen in another way, it became a social and ideological zone filled with cultural, ethnic and political markers to which workers could and did attach themselves even as they fought or negotiated with managements over immediate issues. Some aspects of the Outside, therefore, became constitutive elements of working-class activity and awareness.

Outsiders as Agents of Capital

Is it valid to include functions as separate as recruitment and intimidation within the scope of a treatment of the Outside? The basic point about the invocation of 'outsideness' was the matter of interventions in labour - management relations by those who were not workers. The focus of interest on the part of managers who used this term was the question of workers' grievances and agitations. However, we do find non-workers directly associated in production relations in a manner which enabled them to perform certain functions of mediators between labour and capital. Gang-sardars and recruiting contractors became an indispensable feature of recruitment and supervision for men and women working in the mines and factories of Chota Nagpur. Certain foremen in the bigger plants like TISCO played a role in the established union, and management found it necessary to point out that

they may function as excellent "conductors" for the management or they may act as absolute "insulators"... The foreman should realise his responsibility as the representative of the management. He is the man in daily contact with the workers. To these he is the Company. By his treatment they judge the Company.¹⁶

Here then were persons who played an essential though junior role in initiating and managing the labour process and (with the exception of gang-sardars) were not labourers themselves, and yet had the potential of mediating labour relations over and beyond the functions assigned to them by the managers. Could they be considered outsiders? If we limit the use of the term solely to the pejorative sense ascribed to it in the managerial vocabulary, we run the risk of underscoring its ideological utility. In the

¹⁶ TSA, TISCO Review, August 1933, p 19.

extended mode which I am suggesting, however, such persons were indeed 'outsiders', who for the most part, worked as agents of capital. Sometimes they went beyond the limits tolerable to the managements, in which case, of course, they would become bad outsiders.

On the other hand, an extreme expression of the Outside was the function of physical intimidation, so important a means of maintaining the subordinate position of workers at the shop floor. During the period under survey, violence in industrial relations was so endemic that Mahatma Gandhi was constrained to remark upon it in one of his rare visits to the area. The culprits were the notorious *goondas* and *dalals* (management agents). Such treatment was part and parcel of managerial strategy in the metallurgical industries and the coalfields of Chota Nagpur. Very often the men who performed these tasks were workers - in this case, however, they were inevitably working under instructions from certain management executives or union leaders sympathetic to management. There are several examples of this phenomenon - in the case of TISCO, one W.V.R. Naidu, came to be known as the 'jackal of the Company', and had at his command a group of musclemen who regularly broke up workers' meetings in the 1930's. This group acquired the appellation 'Anti-Party'. Glaring instances of their modus-operandi were the breaking up of Subhas Bose's meeting in Jamshedpur in September 1931, their disruptive activities during the period of the Depression, when workers were desperately trying to keep afloat some kind of solidarity actions, and their violent reactions to the immensely popular meetings of the newly released Maneck Homi in 1935. These men were associated with the Metal Workers' Union led by the railway union leader V.V. Giri who later rose to become the President of India. The M.W.U. was a body designed to fulfil its founder's aspirations to leadership of Jamshedpur's workers, and whose achievements as a union were as intangible as its muscle power was substantial. (Its illustrious mentor made no mention of it in his memoir). The personal aspect apart, it is the analysis of this other meaning of the outsider that concerns me. It is apparent that a complex and gradated structure of control lubricated by violence was essential to the working of colonial capitalism, and equally obvious that such a system was planned and worked from the Outside, with the

active connivance of certain 'outsiders'.

Outer Space and Inner Agency

The Outside was the sphere of control both in a formal and informal sense - if the controllers were controllable, then this realm appeared benign, but if they acquired characteristics of the volatility which managers so dreaded, it acquired a threatening aspect. (The sphere of informality bestraddled by outsiders created the potential for manipulation). The deliberate manipulation of labor at an ideological and institutional level was something very real. Manipulation signified a collaborative nexus of interests between politicians, officials, managers and unionists. I am referring not to a static phenomenon but to a set of social practices which were fluid in terms of persons involved and circumstance but which seen objectively, constituted a distinct mode of control and intervention. There are several examples of this nexus. The relationship between TISCO and its workers was steeped in subtle manipulation and blatant conspiracy - in one case it turned out that top management was engaged in financial speculation in their own shares during a major strike. This was still a relatively minor case - the intrigue which accompanied the installation of Subhas Bose as president of the recognised union in the steel city; and the ensnarement of Homi in litigation which ended in a prolonged jail term are epics in the history of Indian unionism.

Powerful managements operated in close liaison with officialdom and union leaders in turn. Such a reknowned figure as C.F. Andrews, a close associate of Gandhi and president of the All-India Trade Union Congress for 1928 was not averse to scuttling the election process in the TISCO union in order to prevent the emergence of a radical leadership. Managements would manipulate the announcement of concessions in order to strengthen a preferred leadership, and maintain groups of agent-provocateurs masquerading as political cadre. Men famous for their radical opposition to the Empire would engage British officials in covert negotiations involving the means by which they could most conveniently ditch their followers. Government officials would prop up a particular leader at one conjuncture and do their best to destroy them in the next. Arrangements to manipulate the judicial process would be fixed by American general

managers and English governors over lunch. It would not be an exaggeration to say that most major developments in the labor movement were accompanied by covert activities of one type or another.

A related question in the matter of leadership and the role of outsiders is that of the maverick. This phenomenon also highlights the ambivalence inherent in the Outside as a sphere within which workers might sometimes discover persons and ideas which resonated (for a certain period of time) with their conjunctural interests. The history of workers' movements in Chota Nagpur contains crucial instances of interventions by persons who either had no political affiliation at all, such as Maneck Homi, or who strained the notion of party discipline to the utmost - such as Abdul Bari, the Congressman deputed to Jamshedpur in 1937 and who became the scourge of industrialists in the late 1930's. These persons were thorns in the side for managements, for whom they typified the dangers inherent in the role of the outsider. It is noteworthy that contrary to their self-perception as charismatic Subjects with some kind of magical authority over their following, (it was their eccentricity that attracted them to the workers), these mavericks performed the function of leadership in a politically over-determined impasse whose ingredients included a radicalized workforce, recalcitrant managements and bankrupt or non-existent unions. In a political sense, there were certain conjunctures wherein the utility of a leader arose from his lack of restraint, an unpredictability in the face of strong pressures which made him responsive to a vibrant mood among the working population. The maverick was too much of an outsider for his own good - by being outside political control and far too close to ('inside') the mentality of his followers. Of the two the first, Homi, was probably the only person innocent of ideological motivation to be incarcerated for five years on account of being a union leader. The mavericks represented radical aspirations, they were larger than life precisely on that count, and their historical significance may only be appreciated by a close attention to context.

The Outside was imbued with informality and ambivalence whose distinct and sometimes opposing elements were determined by the ebb and flow of class relations at

any given moment. If one could employ Leninist vocabulary without its political implications one would say that there was indeed an 'outside' and an 'inside' related to the workers' struggles. The two spheres related to each other through a kind of social and political osmosis, and yet the 'outside' was the universe of the 'controllers', the 'inside', that of the controlled. However, the seeming objectivity of this remark must be tempered by an awareness of the tension which characterised the perceptions of the various players in the ongoing historical movements of the working class. The capitalists and bureaucrats could dispense with their objections to the Outside when the outsider concerned was amenable to their interests. For their part, workers could and did extend their boundaries of class interest to include those outsiders with whom they could identify on nationalist or racial criteria - assuming, of course, that these persons were speaking on their behalf in the immediate battles which were their strongest concerns. Ultimately the sphere of the Outside performed a function *inside* the ambit of the class struggle, forming an essential part of it, and demonstrating, if ever there was any doubt, that the labour movement and the self-consciousness of the working class did not lie passively within the historical process, but was an active participant in it.